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Trend participation rate all-time high of 65.9 per cent

Australia's trend participation rate increased to 65.9 per cent in May 2019, a new high, according to the latest information released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

ABS Chief Economist Bruce Hockman said: "Australia's participation in the labour force continues to rise with the participation rate up 0.4 percentage points over the past year to an all-time high of 65.9 per cent."

"The participation rate for people aged 15-64 also climbed to a record rate of 78.4 per cent, with a record 74.3 per cent of people in this age group employed," Mr Hockman said.

The trend unemployment rate remained steady at 5.1 per cent, for the third consecutive month.

Employment and hours

In May 2019, trend monthly employment increased by around 28,000 persons. Both full-time and part-time employment increased by 14,000 persons.

Over the past year, trend employment increased by 333,000 persons (2.7 per cent) which was above the average annual growth over the past 20 years (2.0 per cent).

The trend monthly hours worked increased by 0.2 per cent in May 2019 and by 2.5 per cent over the past year. This was above the 20 year average year-on-year growth of 1.7 per cent.

Underemployment and underutilisation

The trend monthly underemployment rate rose slightly to 8.5 per cent in May, returning to the same level as May 2018. The trend underutilisation rate decreased by 0.3 percentage points over the year.

States and territories trend unemployment rate

The trend unemployment rate increased by 0.1 percentage points in the Australian Capital Territory, and remained steady in all other states and territories.

"Over the year, unemployment rates fell in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and Western Australia, and increased in South Australia, Tasmania, the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory," Mr Hockman said.

Seasonally adjusted data

The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate remained steady at 5.2 per cent in May 2019, while the underemployment rate increased by less than 0.1 percentage points to 8.6 per cent. The

seasonally adjusted participation rate increased by 0.1 percentage points to 66.0 per cent, and the number of persons employed increased by around 42,000.

The net movement of employed persons in both trend and seasonally adjusted terms is underpinned by around 300,000 people entering and leaving employment in the month.

More details are in the May 2019 issue of Labour Force, Australia (cat. no. 6202.0). In addition, further information, including regional labour market information, can be found in the upcoming May 2019 issue of Labour Force, Australia, Detailed - Electronic Delivery (cat. no. 6291.0.55.001), due for release on 20 June 2019.

These publications are available for free download (after release) from the ABS website: https://www.abs.gov.au.

Media note:

- When reporting ABS data, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) must be attributed as the source.
- For media requests and interviews, contact the ABS Media Team on 1300 175 070 or media@abs.gov.au (8.30am - 5pm Monday - Friday AEST).
- The ABS produces trend estimates to provide a more reliable indicator of the underlying behaviour of the Labour Force series. Trend estimates were introduced into the Labour Force series in the mid 1980s and are available back to February 1978. Trend estimates are considered the best indicators of the underlying behaviour in the labour market. See paragraphs 29 to 38 of the Explanatory Notes in Labour Force, Australia (cat. no. 6202.0).
- Labour Force Survey data is complemented by other ABS measures to build a comprehensive picture of the labour market.
- Jobs in Australia (cat. no. 6160.0) data provides insights into all jobs held throughout the year.
- Labour Accounts data provides the number of filled jobs at a point-in-time each quarter, while Labour Force data measures the number of people employed each month.
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